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Maryland Pamphlet

18th CONGRESS,
2d SESSION.

[18]

MEMORIAL

OF THE

PRESIDENT AND DIRECTORS

OF THE

Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company.

DECEMBER 27, 1824.

Read, and referred to the committee of the whole House, to which is committed the *bill to authorize the subscription of stock in the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal Company.*

WASHINGTON:

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1824.

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MEMORIAL

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

The Memorial and Petition of the President and Directors of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company,

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

That the importance of uniting the waters of the Chesapeake and Delaware bays, by a water communication, was felt many years prior to the Revolutionary war; and it is believed, that, had the Canal existed at that eventful period, it would have saved the government, in carriage alone, a sum more than equal to the whole expense of the work; and that during the late war, the savings would not probably have been less. That your memorialists are not in possession of data on which to frame an accurate estimate of these facts, but that some idea may be formed of the savings it would have occasioned to individuals from the ascertained circumstance, that, during six months of the late war, a single mercantile house in Philadelphia, paid for the inland transportation of produce from the State of Virginia to that city, the considerable sum of about sixty thousand dollars; but, it is not from considerations of this character alone that the advantages of this Canal are to be tested, even in a national point of view: for,

In a confederacy of great republics, like that of these United States, whose existence rests, under Providence, on the will of the people, it is of incalculable importance to cement the most distant parts together by the ties of mutual interest, the constant interchange of good offices, and the bonds of commercial intercourse. In these respects the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal presents itself in the most imposing and favorable aspect to public patronage: for your memorialists think they may challenge the world to produce another instance in which more extensive, fertile, and increasingly productive regions can be united by so short a line of artificial navigation—this being less than 14 miles.

That the proper location of this Canal being a subject of deep interest to the Stockholders and the public, your memorialists, on the revival of the company in 1822, consumed more than 18 months, and expended more than ten thousand dollars in new surveys and other

preparatory measures, in all which, they were aided by the best scientific talents within their command. That the mass of information thus obtained, together with all the facts and documents in their control, were then submitted to a Board of Examining Engineers, composed of General Bernard and Colonel Totten of the United States' Engineer Department, and two other gentlemen of great experience and acknowledged talents in the formation of canals, who, after having carefully explored the ground between the two bays, and after having held two separate sessions of consultation, unanimously recommended the route which the Board, after great deliberation, unanimously adopted. That this Canal commences at Newbold's landing, on the river Delaware, opposite the Pea Patch, on which Fort Delaware is erected, and, passing through St. George's Meadows, is lifted by a lock of 8 feet into St. George's mill-pond, and proceeding westwardly descends 6 feet into Back Creek, having a tide lock at each extremity, which, with the two lift locks, are all the locks embraced by the plan. That it is intended to create an artificial harbor on the Delaware for the reception and protection of vessels; and the Board had made arrangements last spring for its early completion, but, on subsequent reflection, they judged it most advisable to apply their funds in the first instance to objects of more pressing emergency. The Canal itself is 60 feet wide at the water line, 36 feet at bottom, 8 feet deep, and sufficiently capacious to accommodate coasting vessels. A canal of smaller dimensions might have proved adequate to the passage of boats from the Susquehanna, but the public would not have been equally well accommodated.

That the forming of this Canal has ceased to be matter of speculation: contracts for its entire excavation have been executed: the lands and water-rights on the whole line have been secured: able Engineers are engaged in superintending the work: considerable progress has been made: large sums expended: men of capital and enterprise have embarked their services and funds in the undertaking; and no rational doubt can exist of its practicability and usefulness, nor of its yielding a profitable pecuniary return to the stockholders. Hence, your memorialists are induced to think, that it is entitled to your consideration and patronage in preference to schemes however ingeniously devised or laudable in their design, which are but in meditation, and for the accomplishment of which, no funds have been provided.

That, should Congress find it compatible with their views, and deem it for the interest of the country, ever to adopt a system of internal improvement, or to appropriate a portion of the national funds to the purposes of inland navigation, it is respectfully suggested that a commencement is to be made at some point, and at some period, and on some object, fairly entitled to public favor; nor is it in the power of your memorialists to conceive that any canal in these United States, whether at present in a state of progressive execution or but as yet in contemplation, can come before the National Representatives with higher or more legitimate claims to public bounty.

That the excavation and embankment on the eastern division of this Canal amounts, at the present time, to cubic yards 714,930
And on the western division to 158,866

All done since April last, and amounting, in the whole, to 873,796

Equal to about 37 miles of canal of the usual dimensions.

That on section No. 5 alone, which is on the deep cut the excavation amounts to 668,704 cubic yards, and three of the sub-contracts are finished to the depth of 12 feet, in a style which would do honor to any part of Europe; and that the Delaware tide lock, which is an excellent piece of workmanship, 100 feet long between the gates, 22 feet wide, and containing 40,000 cubic feet of solid masonry, is completed.

That, during the summer months, there were from 1000 to 1200 men, and about 200 teams employed on the works, and that there remain, since the more active season for labor has passed, 700 men and 70 teams, exclusively of several powerful machines, the ingenious invention of one of the contractors, which are occupied in excavating the St. George's meadows.

That the estimate of the examining Engineers, designedly framed on a scale of great liberality for the completion of the Canal, is advanced of 1,350,000 dollars, but that contracts have been made for the whole line at upwards of 100,000 dollars less than this estimate.

That the available funds of the company may be assumed at 700,000 dollars, viz:

New private subscriptions	$425,000
Subscription by the State of Pennsylvania	100,000
Do. by the State of Maryland	50,000
Do. by the State of Delaware	25,000
Old subscription, calculated at	100,000
	$700,000

That, should Congress, for objects of internal improvement, appropriate to the several states, as has been sometimes indicated, sums graduated on the scale of representation, your memorialists are free to express their apprehensions, that no portion of it will fall to their lot, not from any known unfriendly bias entertained towards them by any of the states—far otherwise: for, they believe they possess the good wishes of them all. Had the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal been located exclusively on the soil of any particular state, it might long since have been effectually aided and fostered by that state as its especial offspring; but, claiming to be more peculiarly national in its origin, character, and purposes, than any similar undertaking in these United States, it naturally cleaves to Congress as the infant to its mother's breast, for that nourishment and protection which are to give health and vigor to its being.

That this subject has been so frequently introduced to the notice of Congress, that your memorialists are restrained by motives of de-

licacy and respect from obtruding themselves on your valuable time and patience, in further urging the inestimable value of this canal to the nation; and therefore pray that your honorable bodies may be pleased to take the subject into your most serious consideration, and grant them such speedy relief by a subscription to their stook as you in your wisdom shall see fit.

By order of the Board,

JAMES C. FISHER, *President.*

H. D. GILPIN, *Secretary.*